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1. The National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) 2023. Congress passed and the President signed the final agreed upon text of the FY23 NDAA. NDAA has a number of provisions that affect our military personnel including:

- A 4.6% pay raise for military service members
- Authorizes additional funding to address the effects of inflation on compensation
- Rescinds the mandate that service members be vaccinated against COVID-19
- Requires a pilot program to hire special education inclusion coordinators at Child Development Centers with a high population of military children enrolled in the Exceptional Family Member Program.
- Extends a pilot program to expand enrollment eligibility at domestic dependent elementary and secondary schools.
- Establishes a Basic Needs Allowance to ensure that all service members can meet the basic needs of their families.
- There will be a pilot program to reimburse military families for certain child care costs related to a permanent change of station
- Makes improvements relating to behavioral health care and to study suicide rates in the Armed Services.

For a complete list of what is in the NDAA visit: https://www.armed-services.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/fy23_ndaa_agreement_summary.pdf

2. NEA-Retired Spring Conference. The NEA-R Spring Conference will be March 12-14, 2023, at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in San Francisco. NEA-R will offer a number of workshops for NEA-R members including NEA's very successful program to assist members who wish to run for government office. Last year, 73% of the NEA members participating in this program were able to win their elections. Registration will open later this month and will be \$120. Visit www.nea.org/retired for more information.

3. REAL ID requirement extended again. The Department of Homeland Security announced its intent to extend the REAL ID full enforcement by another 24 months from May 3, 2023, to May 7, 2025. The REAL ID Act established minimum security standards for state-issued driver's licenses and identification cards to prevent counterfeiting and fraud. All travelers 18 years of age or older will need a REAL-ID compliant driver's license or identification card, state-issued enhanced driver's license or another TSA acceptable form of identification at airport security checkpoints for domestic air travel.

4. Free COVID Test Program Extended. The Biden Administration has extended the program for persons to request free at-home COVID tests. They can be ordered at www.COVIDTests.gov or by calling 1-800-232-0233.

5. The Cost of Postage Going Up. The United States Post Office announced that postage rates will go from 60 cents to 63 cents for the first ounce, on January 22, 2023. The additional ounce will remain 24 cents. If you have existing

“Forever Stamps,” you can continue to use them and are protected against the price increase. However, if you buy “Forever Stamps” on or after January 22, 2023, you will pay 63 cents per stamp.

6. What Will Happen to the Efforts to Repeal GPO/WEP in the new Congress? NEA has not given up on its effort to repeal GPO/WEP that unfairly penalizes many of our retirees. An NEA Task Force met last month with NEA Government Relations planning our strategy with the new Congress. Here is a brief synopsis of the actions NEA has taken last year:

- NEA held a virtual Day of Action on May 24, 2022. We had 486 phone calls, over 6,000 emails and 50 in-person meetings with members of Congress.
- As a result of our member’s advocacy, on May 24th the chairs of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, Congressional Black Caucus, Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus, and the House Democratic Task Force on Aging sent a letter to Speaker Pelosi urging her to bring H.R. 5723-the Social Security 2100: A Sacred Trust to the House floor for a vote.
- The NEA Board of Directors lobbied on GPO/WEP repeal twice in 2022 with more than 74,000 messages sent to Congress.
- The NEA Representative Assembly passed New Business Item 2, creating a GPO/WEP repeal lobbying cadre made up of 2 members from impacted states. The Federal Education Association has 2 members on this cadre.
- In July, 2022, The Social Security 2100 Act (HR 82) surpassed 300 co-sponsors, ensuring widespread support in Congress. The bill was placed on the House consensus calendar.
- On September 20, 2022, this bill received an historic markup in the House Ways and Means Committee.
- NEA Government Relations personnel met with the House leadership to discuss a floor vote to repeal GPO/WEP in October, 2022.
- NEA Federal Lobbyist spoke with Representative A. Spanberger, a lead sponsor for HR82, about re-introducing the bill in the new Congress. She has promised to do so.
- On December 13, 2022, the NEA’s newly formed GPO/WEP lobbying cadre met to plan for a day of action in the Spring, 2023.

Our work on repealing this unfair law is not over. FEA-R will continue to keep its members informed on the actions of this cadre and what steps our members can take to reverse this injustice.
